

It also requires—I wanted to make sure that the Governor and mayor would be using this property for education purposes. That’s what the mayor said he would do; the Governor said he wanted to do that. They took a look at it and decided this is what they wanted to do. And it makes a lot of sense to me, and using it for education purposes will make it easier for me to facilitate the transfer, by the way.

Q. Mr. President, the previous administration didn’t want—I was just wondering, what specifically persuaded you?

*The President.* Well, I took a look at it. I mean, it’s a good question. I took a look at it. I listened to what George said. He’s my friend; I trust his judgment. I’ve known him for a long time, and Rudy Giuliani as well—both of them were passionate in their appeal for us to consider transferring Governor’s Island. And I knew Mike was very interested in enhancing the quality of education in New York City.

And I took a look at it. I came back—obviously, things didn’t happen quickly after September the 15th trip, because we had a lot on our mind. But it took a while to work it through the White House staff, and it arrived on my desk sometime last

week. And the recommendation was that we could transfer this property, if that’s what I wanted to do. And it’s something I want to do, because I think it’s going to make the life of a city that has been tragically affected by killers and murderers better. And I think it will enhance the quality of education for the people of New York. And to me, that is a worthwhile and noble cause.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Gen. Anthony Zinni, USMC (Ret.); and Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. The President also referred to the Tenet plan, the Israeli-Palestinian cease-fire and security plan of June 13, 2001, negotiated by Director of Central Intelligence George J. Tenet; and the Mitchell report, the Report of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee, issued April 30, 2001. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Governor Pataki and Mayor Bloomberg. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Remarks Honoring the 2002 Super Bowl Champion New England Patriots April 2, 2002

*The President.* I’m honored to welcome the Super Bowl champ Patriots to the Rose Garden. I want to thank their owner, Bob Kraft, for his leadership. And of course, I want to thank their coach. Coach Bill has brought a lot of organization and clarity of purpose to this organization. I can remember when they were down on you a little bit—I know how you feel. *[Laughter]*

As a matter of fact, the Patriots learned an interesting lesson. I remember watching all the experts talk about the Super Bowl. No one thought they’d win. They learned

what I learned, that in politics and sports, the experts are often wrong.

I was really impressed by the character of this team. Most of all—I obviously watched the game—I was amazed at the play and how they won. For a guy growing up in Texas, that snow game looked pretty rough. *[Laughter]* But I know all the Patriot fans were thrilled with that game and the Super Bowl. I know you’ve got some great fans here.

Obviously, Members of the Congress are great fans. It's good to see Senator Kennedy, Senator Jeffords, who are here. I don't know if any Members of the Congress are here as well, but I want to thank you both for coming.

I was impressed by a lot, but let me tell you what impressed me most was when the team took the field prior to the Super Bowl. It wasn't one of these things where the spotlight was on any individual; everybody went out at the same time. I thought that was a pretty good signal to America that teamwork is important, that the individual matters to the team, but the team is bigger than the individual. That's one of the things I try to explain to people in Washington, that we're here to serve something greater than ourself. And I appreciated so very much that signal to the country.

I remember watching the early Patriots there in Houston, when they came down to the AFL. And I remember Gino Cappelletti. And Gino Cappelletti said this about this team—I think you probably remember Gino Cappelletti, don't you, Senator Kennedy? You were around in those days—[laughter]—barely, but around. “I think every guy that ever played for the Patriots would be proud of this bunch. They are not only a team with great heart and toughness; they're also a good group

of guys. They were champs on the field and, more importantly, champs off the field”—by sending not only a clear message about the importance of teamwork but about the importance of serving something greater than yourself in life, whether it be the Salvation Army in the Boston area or after-school programs so some child realizes somebody cares about them or how they conduct their own home life—is just as important to me and America, for that matter, than winning on the football field. So it's an honor to welcome true football champs but, as well, really fine Americans to the Rose Garden.

Congratulations.

[At this point, Robert Kraft, chairman and owner, and Bill Belichick, head coach, made brief remarks and presented the President with a team jersey and an autographed football.]

*The President.* I appreciate that. Thank you, sir. That is short. [Laughter] Congratulations. Congratulations to you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to retired Patriots player Gino Cappelletti. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Mr. Kraft and Mr. Belichick.

## Remarks Following a Roundtable Discussion With Early Childhood Education Experts in Media, Pennsylvania April 2, 2002

I just finished a discussion about early childhood development. I want to thank the experts and the teachers and the soon-to-be teachers and those who are running Head Start programs for sharing their knowledge with Secretary Paige and me.

One thing is for certain: In order for all Americans to realize the American

Dream, we've got to make sure every child has the necessary foundation to be good readers, good writers, good comprehenders, which means that this Nation must do a better job of focusing our education strategy on early childhood development programs.